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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/630,470	07/29/2003	Kazuhiro Matsuyama	59651 (49321)	9184
21874	7590	01/10/2006	EXAMINER	
EDWARDS & ANGELL, LLP P.O. BOX 55874 BOSTON, MA 02205				NGUYEN, ANTHONY H
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2854	

DATE MAILED: 01/10/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/630,470	MATSUYAMA ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Anthony H. Nguyen	2854	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 24 October 2005.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-10 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 1-10 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date. 10/14/2005
 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
 6) Other: _____.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Horiguchi et al. (US 6,113,094) in view of Shiraishi (US 6,445,891).

With respect to claims 1, 4-7, 9 and 10, Horiguchi et al. teaches an image forming apparatus 2 having a sheet eject mechanism 3,5 which includes a receiving tray 36, 38 (Horiguchi et al., Figs. 1-4) and a control device 27 which controls or regulates the amount of the page sheets discharged onto the tray 36, 38 based on a size of the page sheets to be discharged (Horiguchi et al., col.5, second paragraph). Horiguchi et al. does not teach the sheet eject mechanism which moves between an initial position and a sorting position and the control device which regulating a delay time required for the sheet mechanism moving from the initial position to the sorting position or other position. Shiraishi teaches a control device (CPU) 31 which regulates a delay time for the sheet eject mechanism which moves from a position to other position via the initial sensor 26, the timing sensors 25, 38 and an offset motor 37. In view of the teaching of Shiraishi, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the image forming apparatus of Horiguchi et al. by providing the sheet ejection mechanism and the control device as taught Shiraishi for determining or regulating the delay time for the sheet eject mechanism moving from the sorting position to the initial position based on the various

sheet sizes or length of the sheets to improve the efficiency of feeding a print medium to a stacker. With respect to claims 2 and 6, Shiraishi teaches the use of the control device 31 which compares the transport interval with a preset or predetermined time to set a delay time (Shiraishi, Fig.4 and col.3, the second and third paragraphs). With respect to claims 3,4,7 and 8, the use of a control device to determine the size of a sheet and calculate the transport interval with a reference delay time is conventional as exemplified by Horiguchi et al. and Shiraishi. Note also that Shiraishi teaches a control device that detects an error in the timing of offset stacker (Shiraishi, the abstract).

Response to Arguments

Applicants' arguments filed on October 24, 2005 have been fully considered but they are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

The patents to Yamaguchi and Yamazaki et al. are cited to show other structures having obvious similarities to the claimed structure.

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

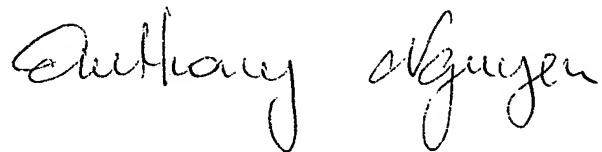
A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Art Unit: 2854

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Anthony Nguyen whose telephone number is (571) 272-2169.

The examiner can normally be reached daily from 9 AM to 5PM. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Andrew Hirshfeld, can be reached on (571) 272-2168.

The fax phone number for this Group is (571) 273-8300.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony Nguyen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Anthony" on the top line and "Nguyen" on the bottom line.

Anthony Nguyen
1/6/066
Patent Examiner
Technology Center 2800